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THEY WHO MOURN
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THE

Commonweal

STEPINAC AND TITO

by Bogdan Raditza

STALIN: DEATH OF A MYTH

by Waldemar Gurian

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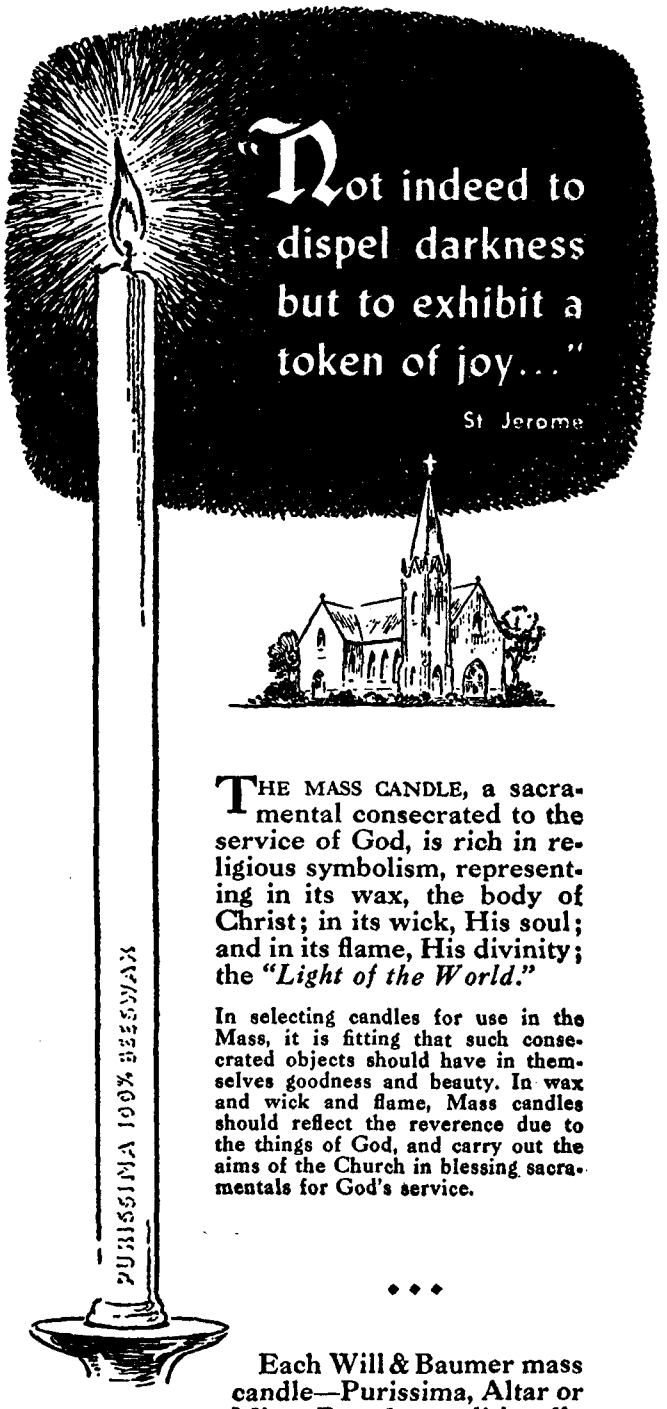

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THIS WEEK

Week by Week 615

Cardinal Stepinac and Dictator Tito
by Bogdan Raditza 618

Stalin: Death of a Myth
by Waldemar Gurian 622

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 624

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 625

Communications 626

They Who Mourn
by Rose Grieco 628

Books 631

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THE Commonweal

week by week

CURBS FOR THE INVESTIGATORS

THERE is a state of mind in politics that might be called the absolutist mind. It is a mentality which craves hard truth in a single sentence, a slogan or a condemnation. It has no patience with complexity.

For all its professed love of truth, it is an enemy of truth, because that fragile commodity loves the labyrinth and rarely shows itself as a single, circumscribed thing. And obviously, that is a handicap to any government, because government is a matter of action, and has no time for Hamlet's speculations. So we work with makeshifts, approximations, compromises, and prudence. To expect perfection is absurd, and to wait for it suicide. That, of course, is what is at the heart of the system of checks and balances.

The absolutist forces half-truths into the molds of his own mind and ambitions. You can make a theory of government out of this, as the Soviet Union has done. For them, the apparatus of modern communications manufactures truth to fit pragmatic necessities.

You can also take the absolutist way of thinking into the structure of a democracy, which is what the isolationists, the Old Guard Republicans, and the doctrinaire liberals do. They love slogans, and dislike distinctions.

The existence of this state of mind is partial explanation for the current Jenner-Velde-McCarthy investigations. Encouraged by the absolutist's vision of total truths and total evils, these men have taken a legitimate tool of government and for partisan motives (or, if you prefer, out of invincible naivete) put it to work in a way that jeopardizes a good deal of what we are fighting for in the cold war: the right to equal justice for all.

Senator McCarthy is the most dangerous man of the three. His method of operation would be just as ugly if he were working under Marquis of Queensberry rules. He is a master of the technique of "clarifying" a witness' statement by substituting his own accusations, the technique of loaded phrases and leading questions.

But under current Senate policy, Senator McCarthy and the other investigators can set their own rules for the game, and a witness going before McCarthy is in the position of going handcuffed against Rocky Graziano.

Congressman Velde, of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, has led off in his committee with similar techniques. That he is as yet inexperienced is demonstrated by his threat to investigate churches, which backfired and brought attack from the National Council of Churches of Christ. Similar condemnation of the investigation of education has come from Princeton faculty members and the Amherst Alumni, among other groups.

PRESIDENT Eisenhower holds the key to one solution of this problem. But he has stayed out of the fight, because of his deeply-felt conviction that Congress, as an equal partner in the government, must keep its own house clean. Pressure is on him from within his own branch of government, however, with a considerable amount of bitterness over "surrenders" to McCarthy. He may yet put pressure on Congress.

But Eisenhower is quite right, in that the basic cure lies in the Congress itself. And in spite of the fear of McCarthy, and the emotional thinking McCarthy exploits, there is a stirring in Congress. With help from public opinion, Congress might bring itself to clamp down on investigation techniques.

It is actually a simple matter. The right of Congress to investigate is unquestioned. But right now the accused receive little of the protection that the whole tradition of American justice demands that they have.

A witness is at the mercy of the committees. What he says, how much he says, and what legal assistance he may have is in large part controlled by the committee.

Recently Representative Kenneth B. Keating of the House Judiciary Sub-Committee investigation of the Justice Department set an admirable precedent

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by formulating definite provisions for the protection of witnesses.

These rules, or restrictions similar to them, could be extended to all investigating committees. Pressure from the public and the White House could keep the investigators out of the noisy and fruitless chases that result from too much reading of one's own publicity. The responsibility lies squarely on the Republican leadership. They can stop the abuses if they wish—and they had better so wish, if we expect to keep our reputation abroad, and much more important, our tradition of justice here at home.

A FOOD RESERVE

THE co-existence of countries in bad economic straits due to unsold farm produce and of peoples in other lands enfeebled by lack of food has long belied our greatly developed capacity for organizing things. The irony of the situation has been painfully intensified in times of major famines. There is no more calamitous instance of the failure to distribute well what is intended for the sustenance of all humanity.

Thus in the early thirties the American farmer was desperate—ruinously low prices and unsold surpluses prevailed at the very time hunger was rife among our own city unemployed, the European proletariat and the traditionally undernourished peoples of Latin America, Africa and the Far East. Now once again farmers here in the United States are anxious. Costs have been rising, commodity prices declining. The threat of large surpluses looms ahead. The biggest single factor is a falling-off in foreign purchases of our farm products. As if this decline were not sharp enough, the Ministers of Agriculture of sixteen nations met in Paris on March 16 to set up an international farm cooperative which would reduce European dependence on imports of American farm products. The target is the chronic dollar gap.

To meet the situation Secretary of Agriculture Benson has just set up a Foreign Agriculture Service, under a former American Farm Bureau Federation executive, to revive foreign sales of our farm products—or, as Mr. Short himself related it to recent foreign aid, to "bring those dollars back." His sales formula is yet to be revealed.

In the meantime twenty-one Senators, headed by Senator James E. Murray of Montana, have proposed a bill that would go a long way toward bridging the chasm between famines in the world and farm surpluses. It provides for an international food reserve under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. Surpluses would be bought and stored in the United States and other countries. These supplies would work against wide fluctuations in price; they could be had for national currencies (dollars would not be required) and this currency could then be utilized for obtaining other useful raw materials within the food-purchasing country. Presumably private agencies as well as governments would have access to these vital stores.

Hitherto one of the most tragic aspects of major famines has been that they can be foreseen months ahead, yet even then men have been unable to prevent them. Under the Senators' plan, the threat of famine would immediately bring the international food reserves into the picture. Perhaps the heightening problem of American farm surpluses will bring this humane and statesmanlike legislative proposal into a warmly favorable public light. Surely, with all that we now know about stockpiles, transport and crop forecasting, the day has come when we can no longer shrug our shoulders about men in other lands dying for lack of sustenance. It is no longer true that nothing effective can be done.

NEXT WEEK

EDWARD LITTLEJOHN writes about two recent volumes having to do with the historian, Lord Acton.

"It was the sixteenth century which interested Acton the most. And that century with its violence and its all-embracing religions has its special similarities with our own century of violence and all-embracing politics. Acton's studies had one overriding purpose—understanding the living issues of the day. . . . He sought continually to bring the fruits of research to policy in Church and State. After eight years of study in Germany, he returned to England determined through journalism to open up the new world of knowledge in science, history and philosophy to the Catholic community. His hopes were not fulfilled, but a later generation is reaping the harvest of his mind."

WHAT PRICE ECONOMISTS?

FOR Democrats, running against Herbert Hoover has long been a favorite occupation. Whether the office at stake was that of dog-catcher or President, since 1932 few Democrats have been able to resist the temptation to taunt the Republicans with

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all the miseries of the crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression.

On their side of the fence, few jibes enrage the Republicans quite as much as those which link them with economic boom-and-bust. And they have good reason for their anger, for there is no doubt that in the minds of the voters the ghosts of 1929 have not yet been fully exorcised.

Under these circumstances, one would expect the Republicans to lean over backwards to make sure—as far as this is possible—that another economic collapse does not take place while the country is under their leadership. For, completely aside from its disastrous effect on the nation and the fortunes of the entire free world, another serious depression with the GOP in power could very well mean its finish as a political party. Because of this fact, the conduct of the Republican leaders in Congress on a matter like the President's Council of Economic Advisers is hard to understand.

To the layman, the raw material of economics is dreary stuff at best, but even among economists there are liberals and conservatives. A choice by the Republicans from among the latter as replacements for President Truman's appointees would be quite understandable. What is confusing is the apparently widespread desire to cripple or kill the Council entirely.

Many Senators and Representatives now in Washington are obviously possessed by a deep-seated desire to tailor recent history to suit their campaign speeches. Economists, on the other hand, whether they are liberal or conservative, necessarily work with hard facts. Thus the instinct among certain Republicans to shape facts to fit their own theories may be responsible for the current disdain for economists displayed in Republican ranks.

But whatever the reasons, conduct such as that which is now leading to the curtailment of the President's Council of Economic Advisers is short-sighted. No one has a fool-proof system, but a great deal has been learned in the last twenty years about business cycles and measures designed to ease the downward trend when it comes, and the Administration would be wise to take advantage of this knowledge.

TITO AND THE WEST

RECENT events have made the question of Tito's Yugoslavia, and of the free world's attitude toward it, a matter for heated debate. The death of Stalin has suggested new opportunities for exploiting tensions behind the Iron Curtain, and these, in turn, have seemed to underscore Tito's value for the West, both as a symbol and a practical ally. The Marshal, it seems, is on "our" side—for better or for worse.

Whether, and in what sense, we are now on his side is another, more complex, question. Central to it is the religious issue, of course, and the recent elevation of Archbishop Stepinac to the Cardinalate has emphasized this. The Stepinac controversy has consequently been renewed in England and the United States. In both countries the division between those who would canonize Tito as a new-found friend of freedom and those who insist that he remains, at best, a highly unsavory ally, has been widened.

In England, for example, both Mr. Graham Greene and Mr. Evelyn Waugh have recently felt obliged publicly to denounce the Marshal as an enemy of religion against those who now seek to picture him as its friend, and in the United States Catholics have been disturbed to find some of their Protestant friends seeking to justify Tito's persecution of the Cardinal as, in reality, the prosecution of a fascist war criminal.

The indictment of Cardinal Stepinac, crude and naive as it has been, is, of course, part of an attempt to justify Marshal Tito as a "good" Communist, a true friend of the West. The reasoning behind it seems to be that whoever opposes the Soviet Union is a friend of human freedom.

It is curious reasoning, but it is unfortunately familiar. We have heard it before—but from different quarters. Now, used in the case of Tito, it represents a McCarthyism of the Left.

Marshal Tito has not changed. All available evidence indicates that he is the same enemy of freedom and religion, of most of that for which the West is supposed to stand, as he was before his break with the Soviet Union. He, and what he represents, remain the same, and we have doubts that either the Anglican Archbishop of York, who now calls Tito a "friend," or the editors of the *Christian Century*, who have seemed to defend Tito's persecution of the Yugoslav Primate, really like what he stands for.

The only basic thing that has changed is Marshal Tito's situation *vis á vis* the USSR, and this change is the result of the Yugoslav dictator's own drive for power. We in the West may welcome this change. We may indeed be wise to exploit it for our own advantage. But to glorify Tito himself in the process, or to excuse his ruthless treatment of things we should value above all else, is both pernicious and unreal. It is tragic that such attempts are now being made by some who should know better.

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Cardinal Stepinac and Dictator Tito

"IN THE WEST THERE ARE ALWAYS PEOPLE READY TO FALL VICTIM TO THE COMMUNISTS' ATTEMPTS TO MUDDLE THE REAL ISSUE."

BOGDAN RADITZA

THE elevation of Archbishop Stepinac to the College of Cardinals led Tito's government not only to break diplomatic relations with the Vatican but to instigate a vicious new campaign against the prelate who for more than seven years has been resisting Communism in his native Croatia. Every technique has been used to malign the new cardinal's integrity: half-truths, distortion of facts, falsification of documents, re-writing of Croatian and Yugoslav history and even fake photography.

Thus Stepinac has been blamed, not only by Tito but also by some misled Christians in the West, for the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, for the formation of the so-called Independent Croatian state and its operations in massacring Serbs and Jews, as well as for crimes committed through a well-established Nazi-Fascist plan to drive Serbs and Croats into a cruel fratricidal war which was aimed at their mutual extermination and separation.

In Yugoslavia itself, through books, leaflets, editorials, newspaper articles and radio broadcasts, millions of words have been used to convince people that what is wrong with the Croatians and Slovenes is that in the early days of their cultural existence they joined the Roman Catholic Church. The article by Sherwood Eddy which was published in the January 14th issue of the *Christian Century* is full of historical inaccuracies and based on fake documents.

To impress his readers, Mr. Eddy used a letter attributed to an old Yugoslav Catholic liberal, Dr. Prvislav Grisogono, the authenticity of which has been often denied by Dr. Grisogono. Dr. Grisogono is now in France, where he fled two years ago. This writer has received a letter from him, dated February 19, 1953, stating: "In this struggle for *freedom* I am with all my heart on the side of the Vatican, and I refuse to have my name used, in connection with an *apocrif* [fake] letter, in favor of a Communist totalitarianism which denies freedom and destroys it."

Nobody in Yugoslavia believes Tito's propagandists, but in the West there are always people ready to fall victim to the Communists' attempts to muddle the real issue. The indisputable fact is that in Yugoslavia today Christians, and especially Catholics, are persecuted, while in the West Christians are quarreling among themselves over controversial questions they know little about, instead of looking at the essential issue.

To my generation, which never thought it would side with a Catholic prelate on the question of certain individual rights, Stepinac appears as one of the decent and uncompromising great personalities of our times. When I was still in my native Yugoslavia serving Tito's government, I felt that Stepinac was going to win a moral victory because of his unquestionable integrity and courage in resisting Communism. It became clear to me that by opposing Communism's attack on spiritual values, he would rally around him a large cross-section of the population, peasants as well as middle-class. Yet I never thought that so many of our intelligentsia, liberals and anti-clericals, would join Stepinac in his fight against the complete sovietization of Christian Yugoslavia.

WHY didn't Tito arrest and liquidate Stepinac the way he wiped out so many other bishops, priests, monks and nuns in the first "liberation"? The Communists held Stepinac for a while but they were forced to release him because of his extraordinary popularity, the lack of proofs for the charges made against him, and especially because they were anxious to get him to cooperate with the newly established order. The Communists were very anxious to have Stepinac's cooperation. I remember when Msgr. Rittig, an old Cath-

In 1945, Mr. Raditza was Chief of the Foreign Press Department for Tito's government. He is now on the faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson College in Rutherford, N. J.

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olic prelate who cooperated with Tito's government, told me that since I was coming home from the West, it was most important that I visit Archbishop Stepinac and impress upon him the fact that Allied policy was to maintain Tito in Yugoslavia.

While Stepinac was ready to give the new Communist Caesar in the Balkans what was his, the Archbishop was equally determined to oppose every Marxist undermining of the Christian temper of the people, and particularly of Yugoslav youth. In doing so, he became a new David, whose uneven struggle with Goliath gave him so much power that Tito was forced to make his greatest mistake, as great as the one Stalin made in excommunicating Tito.

The core of Tito's mistake was to divide Yugoslavia on Stepinac's case: to identify the Croatian prelate with everything that had been committed during the war by the Croatian ultranationalists and some Nazi henchmen, in order to placate Pan-Serbian ultranationalism.

The Croatian people knew the gap that had existed between the Croatian fascists and the Archbishop; thus his bitter persecution by the Communists was blended with an anti-Croatian flavor. He was soon revered as a saint by the Croatians, while he became the enemy to the majority of the Serbs. The mistake was brought to the danger point for the frail multi-national Yugoslav state when the Communists took the line that every Catholic Croat was disloyal to Yugoslav unity, while they had nothing but kind words for the Serbian Orthodox Church after it accepted the Government's "suggestion" to transform the church into a national organization, as in the Soviet Union.

If the old bitter feud between Rome and Byzantium was opened anew, it was not because the Roman Catholic Church wanted it, or because Cardinal Stepinac wanted it, but because it was the path taken by the Communist policy to destroy the Catholic Church. By associating the Church with Croatian nationalism they created a deep internal crisis.

When I was still in Yugoslavia I felt that the Belgrade Communists would push in that direction, but they were opposed by Croatian Communists. I recall my conversations with Dr. Bakaric, the Communist Prime Minister of the Croatian Government, who strongly opposed this tendency, not from the Marxian point of view but from concern for the national welfare. He was aware of Stepinac's popularity and knew that nothing serious could be established against the prelate for his behavior during the war.

What the Communist Party had learned about Stepinac was that his attitude toward the Independent Croatian State was in direct and open opposition to the Ustacha Croatian ultranationalist movement in power with the Nazis and Fascists. Yet Bakaric was a minority in the top Communist leadership, where the view prevailed that since Stepinac was opposing the new order he should be fought on the ground that he was the chief power behind the pro-Nazi Ustacha movement. Thus Stepinac became that "historically necessary victim" (as Bakaric and some other top Communists used to say confidentially) to justify the Communist war against Catholicism and against the Croatian separation.

In the recent history of Yugoslavia, Stepinac's position is similar to that of other Croatian political figures. His is like the case of a generation of Croatian idealists who, after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, were prisoners of war in Russia or Italy and joined the Yugoslav unit fighting with the Serbian Army on the Salonika front for the Union of what was to become after the first World War, Yugoslavia. Among prominent Croatian and Slovenian clergymen the idea of forming Yugoslavia was very popular. Bishop Strossmayer, Bishop Mahnic, Dr. Janez Krek and Msgr. Koroshets were all in favor of an equal federal commonwealth where Catholic Croats and Slovenes would live their lives together with the Orthodox Serbs.

Yet reality sometimes turns out altogether different from the original idea. Yugoslavia soon became an exclusive Serbian domain, the Serbian Orthodox Church received legal status with all privileges and rights, and the status of the Catholic Church was never legalized.

Yugoslavia became a hated home for the Croats, who were gradually convinced that they had to fight for home rule. When their beloved leader, Stephan Radic, was killed in the Belgrade *Skupstina* by a Serbian ultranationalist, and his successor, Dr. Vlatko Machek, was arrested, the Croats remained faithful to the line of the Croatian Peasant Party: fight the dictatorship of King Alexander with democratic and parliamentary means. A small group of urban intelligentsia, led by Dr. Ante Pavelic, founded a revolutionary secret organization called *Ustacha* the day after King Alexander proclaimed his dictatorship, January 6, 1929. The headquarters of that fascist group was Mussolini's Italy where their leader, Pavelic, was groomed by the Italian Fascist government for the ultimate conquest of the Balkans. There the Croatian fascists were trained and indoctrinated in the methods which they later applied in Croatia during the war.

On the eve of World War II, the Croatian democratic leader Dr. Vlatko Machek was able to negotiate an agreement granting Croatia a certain degree of autonomy. Unfortunately, the agreement came too late. By that hour the destiny of the country could be decided only by the major powers.

THROUGH all this time Stepinac, who had left lay life to enter the priesthood, had swiftly risen

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to the highest Church post in Croatia as Archbishop of Zagreb. From the beginning, Stepinac was firm about not involving the Church in political strife. He did everything possible to keep the clergy in his diocese out of politics. He dedicated himself to social work and founded *Charitas,* to help the poor.

During the period between the two wars Croatian national and cultural unity was seriously weakened. Many Croats were killed by the Serbian police; the Catholic Church had no legal standing. Never did a Serb priest or bishop raise his voice to defend or correct any of these inequities. But the hardest time for both Croats and Serbs came during the second war.

In Croatia, the Ustacha movement transformed the Croatian state into a tool of German and Italian policy in the Balkans. Ante Pavelic and his Ustachas, operating under the orders of Hitler's and Mussolini's agents in Croatia, began a violent persecution not only of Jews and Serbs but also of those Croats who opposed their tyranny. The first to be arrested and persecuted were the leaders of the Croatian Peasant party, Dr. Vlatko Machek and several of his deputies; two of them were killed in concentration camps. Among other prominent Croatian intellectuals kept in prison for a long time were the world-famous sculptor Ivan Mestrovic, the painter Joza Kljakovic, the secretary-general of Catholic Action, Msgr. Jesih.

The major persecution of the Serbs took place in those regions where they are most intermingled with Croats and where Serbs, between two wars, had killed Croats. It was inevitable that a third group would take advantage of the opportunities such strife opened up. As King Alexander's dictatorship had brought the Ustacha movement into existence, so Pavelic's criminal policy ushered Tito and his Partisans into power.

WHAT was the attitude then of Stepinac and of the Church? The massacres against the Serbs were never perpetrated in the Zagreb diocese. The Croatian Catholic clergy has an excellent record, with the notable exception of a few Franciscan friars from the Herzegovinian province, over whom Archbishop Stepinac had no authority.

The Franciscan friars in Herzegovina felt it their duty physically to defend Catholicism and Croatian nationalism. Recruited from the same mountain peasant stock as Serbs, they became Ustachas, as many Serbian priests had become Chetniks. In their passion for Croatia they acted as blindly as Serbian Orthodox priests acted against them. Their experience with the Serbs, in an area where Catholics, Serbs and Moslems live together, made them believe that only a complete separation of Croat Catholics and Moslems from the Serbs could save the Church and the nation. When war broke out, the so-called Independent Croatian State was proclaimed. Some of the friars put their Franciscan garb aside and exchanged the preaching of brotherly love for the sword. They fought the Serbs as the Serbian Chetniks fought the Croat Catholics and Moslems.

These friars paid dearly for their mistakes. All of those who were directly involved in the forced conversions to the Catholic Church and in the killings were excommunicated by ecclesiastical authorities. The Communists, on the other hand, when they took over the region, burned their monastery of Shiroki Brijeg, massacred many of the friars and sent the rest to concentration camps. It is well known that Cardinal Stepinac had nothing to do with them, either directly or indirectly.

Now, however, Tito holds Stepinac responsible for all that happened in that region in the midst of an international and fratricidal war. The dictator even accuses Stepinac of having worked at the beginning of the war for a Nazi victory! Tito forgets what he and his Communist Party did for the Nazis when he ordered all Yugoslav Communists to sabotage the "imperialistic war," in keeping with the Hitler-Stalin pact. (The text of this speech can be read in the official Party organ *Komunist* of October 1st, 1946.)

Stepinac, in 1941, condemned the Croatian ultra-nationalists for associating their cause with the Nazis' and Fascists' and was absolutely firm in advising Catholics to reject both ideologies, Nazi-Fascist and Communist. To Ivan Mestrovic (who is now at Syracuse University), Stepinac declared: "I know that I am going to be killed, either by the Nazis or the Communists, but I am not going to give in to either ideology. They are both enemies of the Church and of the people."

Stepinac never took an oath to the Ustacha regime. He resisted all the ruthless crimes the Pavelic regime committed. When Pavelic, in the first months of his rule, issued a decree suppressing the Orthodox Church in Croatia and forcing its members to become Roman Catholics, Cardinal Stepinac sternly warned his priests to apply the provisions of the Canon Law, by which no one can be received in the Catholic Church under duress. In addition, on May 4, 1941, Stepinac in a letter to Pavelic denounced the execution (ordered without a trial) of two hundred and sixty Orthodox Serbs in Glina.

On May 22, 1941, Stepinac wrote to Minister of Interior Artukovic (who is now in the United States) denouncing the treatment of Orthodox Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. Receiving no reply to his letter, he wrote again on May 30, reiterating his protest. When he realized that the authorities were ignoring him, he went to see Pavelic. Entering his office, the prelate told him: "God's commandment reads: Thou shalt not kill!" And then he left the room without another word.

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IN June, 1941, Stepinac forwarded to the Ustacha leader a letter from Archbishop Josep Ujicic from Belgrade, which was an appeal to put an end to the persecution of Orthodox Serbs in Croatia. In July, preaching in the Cathedral in Zagreb, Stepinac said: "We call God to witness that we have always been opposed to any compulsory attachment to the Catholic Church. We declare that the Church has done all in its power to give help and protection to the Orthodox." In one critical moment when five hundred Serb children were in danger, after their mothers had been sent to concentration camps, the Archbishop went in the middle of the night to take them under his protection. During the trial in 1946, Mrs. Stampar and Dr. J. Budisavljvic, both Serbs, who had been put in charge of these children, went to bear witness in favor of Stepinac, but Tito's "People's courts" refused to listen.

In one of his sermons in 1942, Stepinac said: "All members of the human race without exception are the creation of God . . . . Thus the Church has always condemned and condemns today all violence and injustice which is committed in the name of racial and nationalistic theories. She has never countenanced and does not countenance today the extermination of the Jews or Gypsies on the pretext that they constitute an inferior race."

The conflict between Pavelic and Stepinac came to such a point that one of the Archbishop's most devout co-workers was executed by the Ustacha. Canon Loncar was sent by Stepinac to protest against the forced conversion of Serbs. In the Ministry of Cults the Canon said: "This is strictly a religious issue. The Church cannot and does not wish to receive the Orthodox *en masse* but can only receive individual persons of whom it has been established that they have not been subjected to constraint." Soon after, Canon Loncar was executed.

Archbishop Stepinac then set up special ecclesiastical committees to investigate each reported conversion. In the pulpit and by letter, Stepinac continued his protests against Pavelic's regime, so much so that Pavelic often declared Stepinac to be a "political illiterate," and let him know that if he continued his attacks on the Ustacha regime, he would have to bear the "tragic consequences." Three times the Pavelic government petitioned the Holy See to remove Stepinac as Zagreb's Archbishop because he had incurred the wrath of the Nazis and Fascists.

To Ivan Mestrovic, the Cardinal said he was constantly receiving threatening letters from Pavelic ranks telling him that he "would not be spared if he did not keep quiet." In the official organ of the regime *Nova Hrvatska* (November 7, 1943) the Ustacha Minister of Education, Dr. J. Makanac wrote: "God has given to every category of men a specific amount of duties, and each one must accomplish them according to his ability. This applies too to that high church dignitary who recently in his speeches has stepped over the boundary of his mission and has mixed himself into the things he should not." Having made this clear-cut attack on the Archbishop, the article concluded by saying that the policy of the Ustacha Government will do more good for the Catholic Church and the people than Archbishop Stepinac thinks.

To that, Stepinac answered that people who write should first "examine their own conscience." And he added: "Isn't it true that those who are hiding themselves in the woods are victims of crimes committed by irresponsible elements of the regime and not Communists as they are alleged to be?" This speech, like some others of his, was transmitted not only by the BBC but by Tito's own broadcasting stations to show the fearless attitude of the Archbishop, whose own brother had been killed by the Ustacha.

The Partisans did not liquidate Stepinac as they entered Zagreb in 1945 because, as Tito himself declared even recently, all indications they had received while "in the woods" pointed to the anti-fascist position of the Archbishop and even to his open conflict with the Ustacha. That is why, in 1945, Tito shook hands with Stepinac and asked him to assist the new order in Croatia. In a secret meeting of the Central Committee at the beginning of this year, Tito declared that the Party had "counted on" Stepinac's "collaborating" with the regime.

THE Tito-Stepinac conflict started with the Pastoral Letter of September, 1945, which was the first public indictment of the sovietization of Yugoslavia. When it was read in Catholic churches all over Yugoslavia, it gave courage not only to Catholics but to Orthodox and Moslems, liberals and anti-clericals, and the other anti-totalitarian groups, who crowded the churches as a sign of protest against the new Communist tyranny.

Tito wanted to have Stepinac on his side and did not want to make a martyr out of him. Why then did Tito, only three months after the two shook hands, arrest Stepinac? There is only one answer to that. In the meantime Tito had gone to Moscow. Upon his return, in June 1946, he took an anti-West attitude all along the line: on the question of Trieste, against Greece, against the British units in the Corfu channel, against American airplanes, against domestic democratic leaders and, finally, against the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. The fact that it was the Soviet experts, the famous "engineers of death" who molded the accusation against Stepinac, is the best proof that Tito had done all that in keeping with Soviet policy in Yugoslavia.

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Stalin: Death of a Myth

THE INFLUENCE OF HIS EVIL GENIUS WILL NOT DISAPPEAR WITH HIS PASSING; HIS METHODS WILL SURVIVE.

WALDEMAR GURIAN

IN his last, almost illegible letter, written on his deathbed, Rainer Maria Rilke tells of the various hells he was then experiencing. We do not know what Stalin felt and thought as the brain stroke paralyzed his right side and deprived him of the faculty of speech. We do not even know if he remained alive after he had suffered the hemorrhage, as the official Soviet bulletin claimed. For it is likely that the circumstances of his illness and death had to be presented to the public according to those propaganda needs which have determined the contents of his official biographies.

According to them, Stalin was not a human being but the exponent of the party, that Communist-Bolshevik party which is destined to bring about the perfect society here on earth by its instrument, the USSR.

He was the father of the five-year plans and the collectivization of agriculture, by which socialism has been realized in the USSR. In the great purges he liquidated class enemies who had penetrated party and government. Their physical extermination was necessary—for they had taken advantage of his mildness in the past. He was the creator of the Stalin Constitution; the mastermind of all foreign and internal policies; the victorious military leader in World War II; the wise man who determined how history must be written, which direction artistic and cultural life must take and what must be the results of discussion in all fields from philology to economics.

He was the leader of all progressive mankind and the great stimulator of Russian patriotism. He was merciful, full of understanding for everything and everyone. He was hated by all capitalist, imperialist, reactionary, parasitic elements, whom he fought relentlessly in the interest of the masses. The infallible master of theory and practice, his works were admired and eagerly read—editions running to millions of copies. He was worshipped by the people, although the intrigues and evil activities of his inhuman opponents (the "cannibals" of our society) forced him to recommend incessant vigilance, which trusts no one and constantly uncovers new enemies.

Mr. Gurian, of the University of Notre Dame, is the author of "Bolshevism, An Introduction To Soviet Communism," and chairman of Notre Dame's new program on East Europe and Soviet policies.

That is the official "hagiography" devoted to Stalin (which obviously is not interested in "facts"). According to it, Stalin was always right, a Communist saint, a knight without blemish, full of heroism and grandeur. Some of his actions—for which he was once praised—were "forgotten" after he had become the leader; his participation in so-called "expropriations" (raids on money shipments to replenish the party treasury) are no longer mentioned in his Soviet biographies.

The "official" Stalin is interesting only as proof of how far simplification in a totalitarian regime can go. This Stalin who is above all human weaknesses and passions, and therefore a being without life and blood, bears little similarity to the real Stalin.

Unfortunately, we know little of the late master of the USSR beyond those features which make him a stereotype exemplifying Communist "virtues." And what we know makes him a very average man whose life, interests and manners resemble those of other revolutionaries in the Russian Empire. This very lack of conspicuous qualities was most helpful to his career in the party. He appeared as not too bright; despite his skill as an organizer and his personal courage he could never be expected to outmaneuver as brilliant an intellectual as Trotsky.

How clumsy his speeches and how wooden his writings were—in contrast to those of his defeated rival! His tastes in art were surely not revolutionary, but primitive, utilitarian. He was a man who often displayed common sense, but never originality or profundity; but this common sense, sometimes expressed in the form of satirical remarks (which occasionally could appear as self-irony) was always at the service of his eagerness for power and domination. He liked to hide his cruelty and his love for revenge behind a certain joviality—he seemed to be a kind, truly human Uncle Joe who benevolently smoked his pipe, although from time to time he had to exert himself to keep the unruly children in leash.

He seemed to be humble—did he not tell Emil Ludwig that his ambition consisted in being Lenin's most loyal disciple? The nauseating adoration surrounding his person after he had become the leader—

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from his fiftieth birthday in 1929—was often excused by his admirers (of course, not openly, but in whispers) as a mythology necessary for keeping the masses content. He appeared as the infallible, just legislator and master; the misdeeds of his regime could be ascribed to incompetent and evil subordinates who in the long run received their just deserts in the purges.

STALIN was not only a professional revolutionary for whom Marxian slogans explained everything, and for whom politics consisted of the art of obtaining unlimited power for himself and his henchmen (as long as they were useful). He was an exponent of certain typical aspects of the world of the twentieth century. Ideas have turned into forces driving for organization and power. The means swallow up the ends: the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the use of violence in order to abolish all violence, the totalitarian state which aims to abolish the state, become ends in themselves. The utopia is postponed to a remote future—so far away that it is beyond human expectation. Yet it serves to justify and establish the unlimited power of those who come together and act in its name.

Stalin took hold at that stage of the Soviet regime where systematic organization came more and more to replace the enthusiasm of the utopian belief in the coming classless society. That did not mean a break with Lenin, for Lenin's Bolshevism was from the beginning an attempt to combine utopia with realistic power politics: the professional revolutionaries were to bring the utopia about. Use of power, corresponding to existing situations, was necessary to accelerate the coming of the utopia. Stalin only continued the development started by Lenin.

Totalitarian means were increasingly emphasized.

Terror became a means of dominating not only those outside the party, but also those inside. Terror became more and more necessary in order to prevent the drawing of practical conclusions from the constantly increasing contradictions between the promises of Marxist doctrine on the one hand and actual conditions on the other.

The doctrine had served to justify the seizure of power (by promising to end all wars, to end exploitation, etc.). Now, under Stalin, the totalitarian regime itself served to determine how things would be. Terror and monopoly of propaganda, backed by external successes (industrialization and conquest), created and maintained the world in which men under Soviet domination had to move and live. Because Communist-Marxian utopianism pretended to be the expression of science, humanitarianism and reason, its "realization" in the Soviet system was praised as alone human, reasonable and scientific; everyone regarded by its masters, and their leader Stalin, as an enemy or as impure was condemned as inhuman, an enemy of reason as well as of science.

This totalitarian concept of power as an instrument of imposing and maintaining a new closed reality, found its expression in Stalin's policies of industrialization from above, militarization and the utilization of world tensions for expansion's sake.

Planned industrialization established complete control over all realms of society—and made forced collectivism of agriculture unavoidable—for an independent peasantry would have constituted a threat to the whole Soviet system. Stalin realized this, as the so-called rightists, Rykov and Bukharin, did not. Industrialization was a necessary prerequisite to successful militarism, which in turn supplied a foundation for expansionism. This expansionism was furthered partly by the doctrinal claims of the regime (which made it appear as a means toward universal socialism and communism) and partly by the rise of Soviet—and Russian—nationalism. The Soviet Union was the nucleus and master of the world revolution; for only there (until Mao Tse Tung's success in China) had the Communist party gained and organized controlling power without military support from outside.

Stalinism is not a betrayal of Leninism; but Leninism's application and development toward an immediate overthrow of the existing order in industrially advanced countries has disappeared. Enthusiasm has been replaced by greater emphasis on party discipline, and a systematic and ruthless use of terror.

The simple and socio-political engineer, Stalin, with his dislike of intellectual discussions and his exclusive interest in technical problems of power maintenance and expansion, was the man fitted to stabilize and strengthen the Soviet regime after the disappearance of the original Communist hopes and expectations. In this sense he

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was the best disciple of Lenin; he adapted the basic principles of his master to new situations.

THE power engineer, Stalin dealt most ruthlessly with the human material at his disposal; yet he was very cautious in the use of his instrument, the Soviet Union. He realized that lack of consideration for the existing power relations would endanger his regime. He was a master of sudden maneuvers and tactical steps in order to deceive friends as well as adversaries; he also relied greatly on the effect of Communist or pro-Communist propaganda on public opinion in democratic countries. But he hesitated to risk the existence of the USSR by direct open attacks. For his purposes he tried to exploit not so much his own strength as the weakness and the naiveté of other powers. In his last publication, the article in *Bolshevik* on the eve of the nineteenth party congress in 1952, he expressed the expectation that the capitalist powers would not attack the USSR, but become involved in conflicts among themselves.

Therefore he was to some extent a moderating influence. Of course, he was for expansion, but an expansion avoiding risky worldwide open war. In critical situations he avoided open clashes (Berlin blockade, defection of Yugoslavia). He manifestly realized the weaknesses of the USSR and hoped that time would work for his cause, particularly in expectation that the other powers would be psychologically weakened by the permanent tensions and local conflicts of the cold war.

Will his successors have sufficient authority and coolness to avoid adventures? Or will they become prisoners and victims of their own fears and obsessions seeing conspiracies and aggressions everywhere? Stalin, ruthless in his "internal" policies and merciless in his purges, knew how to skirt the rim of the abyss in world affairs. It is not certain that his successors will master this most difficult art as he did. They may be more easily challenged by subordinates and rivals for their alleged pusillanimity and fear of exploiting revolutionary situations. Stalin himself had not only a controlling position, but the authority derived from his successes in internal and external power politics. His successor may be tempted to establish his authority by spectacular moves, by creating conditions which would preclude all active opposition in the circles of the party leadership.

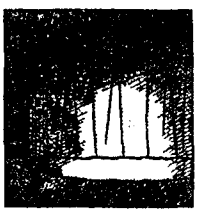
The strength of the Stalin myth ought not to be underestimated. Stalin will attract the mass mind as a son of the people, as a man who rose from the lower depths to a dominant position as master of eight hundred millions. The combination of impersonal calculation and ruthless brutality will attract many who hate the existing order and seek a simple way out. Nothing is as popular as success. His ability to settle disputes by cunning and brutal decisions will be sorely missed if conflicts arise among his successors. I do not believe that the influence of his evil genius will disappear with his death. Even if the Soviet Union should disintegrate, Stalin's political methods will continue to survive in various changing forms. The combination of claiming to regard all actions serving his own power as the expression of necessary laws embodying justice, and an inclination to look upon everything as material for power politics may continue to attract.

That such a man as Stalin could reach the position which he did is a strong condemnation of our time. It demonstrates that this is a period of dissolution in which external power replaces the social authority of tradition while the utopianism of political secularized "religions" takes the place of the true beliefs which make a human social order possible. For such beliefs do not designate a particular power or regime as the *only* right and reasonable one. Stalin is the "philosopher-king" of an epoch which replaces philosophy and a political order directed towards the truly human good, with social and political engineering for the sake of constantly increasing power. This power is exercised by a group that designates itself as the protagonist of the "world spirit" and its march through world history. Stalin, the man who tried to replace mystery in society and human existence with power engineering, has now been stopped by the mystery of death, whose coming is beyond human calculation.

THE STAGE

PORGY AND BESS

A Negro ensemble of individual and collective brilliance is giving Gershwin's opera its most sumptuous revival yet at the Ziegfeld. These voices are of a rich and luscious beauty, and they provide some of the most gorgeous singing of the musical year. Alexander Smallens conducts with spirit, and Wolfgang Roth has kept the stage alive with great washes of color and light. If opulence of sound and physical vivacity were the essential stuff of opera, "Porgy and Bess" would sweep all before it.



Yet I find it impossible to speak of the work without some measure of exasperation. It is so peculiarly, so poignantly, an "American" composition: one thinks of Sandburg and Benet, artists of the second class, and their sprawling, inchoate apprehensions of national life. "Porgy" musically complements their creations. How is one, first of all, to speak of it? As an opera? A lyric drama? A *folk* opera? Its most passionate adherents

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have determined on the last, asserting by this choice a democratic freedom from the restraints and conventions of the formal operatic scheme. Yet what strikes one, even in so lustrous a rendition, is the truth that Gershwin succeeded only in direct proportion to the degree in which he submitted himself to those exigencies.

The vocal line of "Porgy" is uncommonly bold and lovely; those great scooping chords, the wailing sensual pulse which informs its stunning use of a variety of native idioms, display the presence of a first-rate spontaneous musical imagination. But in the absence of an operatic tradition, Gershwin could hold together the extraordinary efflorescence of his talent only with orchestration that is either feeble or frantic, with uninteresting recitative and dispirited connective material. It is precisely the lack of a formal aesthetic pattern, the weakness of structure, which denies "Porgy and Bess" a place in the highest operatic canon.

I should add that the work is emotionally exhausting, running in excess of three hours and sustaining throughout its exacerbated pitch. There is simply too much in it; a wild—ultimately self-destructive—profligacy of incident and sensation. Squalor, vivacity, passion, violence are constantly in the foreground, until one longs for the benignity of one moment of peace or solitude.

It is essentially a white man's view of Negro life which Gershwin has here embraced; sexual clichés and racial myths are of its very substance. And one scene, involving the opera's only excursion into the world of interracial relations, is a strident reminder that Gershwin was also a victim of the social innocence of the thirties. Culturally, one must rejoice in the overwhelming European response to this native work of art, but is it untoward to wish that the Department of State might have chosen for companion piece some less vulnerable and idiomatic illustration of the quality of our civilization? (*At the Ziegfeld.*)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

THE production of Shakespeare's "Merchant" which the City Drama Company mounted last week was not good news on the Rialto. Lacklustre and insipid, it succeeded only in consigning further to the limbo of desuetude this comedy already grimy with the fingerprints of a thousand dusty academics. The play itself, I imagine, suffers from a limitation of contemporary interest, even a hostility: for whatever reason, it is virulently anti-Semitic, and its virtues have reached that point of familiarity at which, however unjustly, they breed contempt.

Come along with it, one wants to admonish Portia's suitors, hurry it up; no, *not* the silver casket, you gull, the *lead,* the *lead! Yes, yes,* a Jew has eyes and senses, and if you prick him he will most surely bleed—who would deny it? What was that about the quality of mercy? No, the moonlight does not sleep very sweetly on this bank, but the audience does.

Such frivolous objections can, of course, be overcome by a distinguished exposition of the text—an exposition which would restore to the play some sense of both its verbal music and dramatic subtlety—but the present group never exceeded minimal requirements. They read it clear and they read it loud, but wit and beauty were not among their preoccupations. Mr. Albert Marre directed competently, but his chief innovation seemed to reside in the introduction of some painfully inconsequential choreography. Note also that Antonio's melancholy had a direct relation to the presence of some untidy young ladies, Fallen Women all, conceivably intended to suggest the local moral anarchy. They did not.

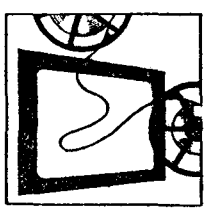
Three performances invite attention: James Daly's finely spoken Gratiano, the intelligent Bassanio of Paul Stevens, and Felicia Montealegre's Jessica (notable more for personal beauty than skill, however). Miss Margaret Phillips' wan and waxen Portia disappointed sharply. And while it was possible to respect the venomous authority of Luther Adler's Shylock, the actor never succeeded in breaking through what appeared to be a neurotic fear of being thought imitative. Broken speech rhythms and wildly eccentric "interpretations" do not constitute novelty of approach. But wicked, gilded Venice itself has rarely seemed quite so moribund. (*Closed at the City Center.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

A GOB IS A GOB IS A GOB

WHEN Hollywood wants to, it can make just as good an off-beat film as anyone else. With a fantastic story about sailors on a desert, "Destination Gobi" is distinctly something out of the ordinary. It isn't so much the story of bravery under adverse wartime conditions that makes this film such an entertaining movie as Everett Freeman's snappy script and Robert Wise's good direction of the almost all-male cast. Whenever the picture seems to be getting too much like a serious documentary about desert life or weather or Navy red-tape, the boys themselves, headed by Richard Widmark, pop up with a wisecrack to remind us they are human and young and American. "Destination Gobi" has its cliché touches, as when the boys grumble too much about their assignment away from the sea or when they ogle the too-beautiful Mongolian girls in typical movie



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fashion, but on the whole it is as bright and fresh as its subject matter.

THE English, who have turned out many a good off-beat movie that made our film makers sit up and take notice, have sent over a stuffy little item that smacks of grade B Hollywood. It is also about sailors, but it puts them where they belong: on the sea. Purporting to tell the story of the stalwart crew on one of those aged destroyers we gave Britain in exchange for some bases, "Glory at Sea" is a hastily-put-together film that is obviously trying to jump the gun on "The Cruel Sea" (now completed by the English) and "The Caine Mutiny" (now being made in Hollywood).

Compton Bennett has directed this film as if he wanted to keep us in the dark most of the time and as if he were greatly adverse to stirring our emotions at all. The cast, headed by Trevor Howard, is very, very British and tight-lipped, and underplays even the most harrowing and sentimental episodes. Audiences who remember Noel Coward's famous wartime film, "In Which We Serve," with its vivid depiction of life at sea and cross-section of officers and men, will find this new movie derivative—to put it mildly. Perhaps we should hunt up a revival of the Coward, or just wait to see hellzapoppin aboard the Caine.

FOR those who like their nautical-minded actors in the water, instead of on it or on a desert without it, there's "City Beneath the Sea," an adventure film, directed by Budd Boetticher, in which Robert Ryan and Anthony Quinn play a couple of fun-loving but tough deep-sea divers. You're not expected to believe any part of this hoked-up script, so you can just relax while Bob and Tony walk about the ocean floor (off Kingston, Jamaica) while searching for a million dollars in gold bullion, get into fights with their bosses and ex-bosses, and become amorously involved with Mala Powers and Suzan Ball. The Technicolor in some of these scenes is very pretty; and, in the deep-sea episodes, the bubbles rising from our gasping heroes are positively beautiful.

AS a movie, "The Stars Are Singing" is pretty stodgy stuff. Its tired story of a young girl who arrives in this country as a stowaway from an Iron Curtain country is done without much lift or imagination; and the experiences that befall this girl, whose stay in the United States becomes a national issue, are not half as amusing as the makers of this film apparently thought.

But if "The Stars Are Singing" is to be considered only as Rosemary Clooney's introduction to movie audiences, it is, I suppose, successful. Miss Clooney sings well and has a fresh, aggressive enthusiasm that will no doubt win her many fans. She plays a struggling singer who hopes to use the stowaway (Anna Maria Alberghetti, who has a lovely voice and a pleasant unassuming manner) to her own advantage; and she goes about her plans with all the vigor of Betty Hutton. Also in the cast are Lauritz Melchior, as an ex-opera singer who opera-sings several numbers, Tom Morton as a dancer out of work who dances several numbers, and Bob Williams as a dog trainer whose dog does many numbers—they're good, but too many dog acts are exhausting.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In presenting the "liberal" Catholic view [February 20, 1953], Mr. Wilhelmsen stressed that for the liberal the modern age differs "substantially" from the old, since the twentieth century is bringing forth a "completely" new world. The "liberal" Catholic must reject these quoted adjectives, for his thick-rooted contention is that no age can be completely new or substantially different, precisely because history represents a process in which the Divine Plan is unfolded, not a relatively static condition into which a Divine Blueprint is inserted from time to time to remind men of what history *should* look like.

The task of the Christian is to carry Christ into the heart of every age, no matter how messy, smelly, effete or turbulent that age may be. The decision of the First Council of Jerusalem to cut the young Church free from the framework of the Jewish Law and carry Christ to the Gentiles rested on such a reading of history. When the ancient world was smashed under the hammer-blows of the barbarians, the Roman Empire was destroyed, but the Church survived because it took up the challenge of its present and went about the arduous task of conquering her conquerors by absorbing them into the very Mystical Body which they had wounded.

This process of adaptation and assimilation took the labors and the lives of many Christians who were convinced there was a world to be saved, even though it was a world peopled by savages who burned monasteries, murdered priests and destroyed books and barns with impartial barbarity.

When the world of the Middle Ages was formed, the same "liberal" view of history was operative in its greatest achievements; the past existed as a tool in the hands of the present, and therefore was neither "a bucket of ashes" nor a faded flower pressed in a book.

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Thus, the great achievement of St. Thomas Aquinas lies not only in his quiet originality, but also in his profound power of absorption, assimilation, and transmutation of whatever was best in non-Christian thought. In looking on his work as one of the great monuments of the Middle Ages, we must not forget that though the architect was Christian, the material had been supplied by Jew, Greek, Roman and Moor. It is no grave historical oversimplification to say that the Catholic "conservatives" of the thirteenth century by turns burned, proscribed or regretted the *Summa* because it was too "liberal."

In extolling the staggering accomplishment of St. Thomas in the thirteenth century we must not forget the opposing figure of Erasmus in the fifteenth century, protesting against this fusion of Aristotle and Christ effected by scholasticism, since "Christ without philosophy" is quite sufficient; or the words of Malebranche in the seventeenth century calling scholasticism "the philosophy of the serpent" because it made use of pagan thought.

All of these and similar attacks were made, significantly enough, in the name of religion, and sought to establish the pristine "tradition" of the Gospel by filtering out the contaminations of scholasticism. The history of scholasticism would seem to suggest that today's tradition was yesterday's intellectual innovation.

Consonant with the tendency of most modern Catholic conservatives to set the Middle Ages in a golden frame as God's Masterpiece, is their tendency to see the Renaissance and Reformation as irresponsible vandals who stole into the museum and slashed the painting; it, and we, shall never be the same again.

But this view of history, by stressing the dire effects of the Reformation, keeps us from seeing the great glories of the Counter-Reformation, and, perhaps more importantly, the view of *their* present which the great Catholic figures of that epoch entertained. We cannot think of St. Ignatius, for example, anticipating T. S. Eliot's conviction that "the men of today are working for a world in which they would find it intolerable to live,"—and then standing by hopefully waiting for the crash.

Mr. Wilhelmsen is less than accurate when treating of the liberal's theological orientation, for the liberal's theology is as "incarnational" as the conservative's claims to be. The difference seems to lie in just what each regards as the operation of the Incarnation in history.

For the liberal insists that the conservative puts arbitrary limits upon our full perception of what the Incarnation means by tending to see it *fully* identified (and the adverb is important) only with a socio-political structure which is dying, if not already dead. But just as Christ had to become incarnate in and for the fifth-century Goths, the sixteenth-century Chinese or the seventeenth-century American Indian, so too He must become Flesh and dwell amongst us—all of us—in what Mr. Wilhelmsen terms our "technological" twentieth century. Modern man is wounded, as Mr. Wilhelmsen points out, but that is hardly enough reason to leave him by the wayside; it is the task of the Good Samaritan—an alien, as we Catholics are to the modern world—to heal his wounds, not simply point out to him the fact that he is bleeding.

But how can we lead modern man if he sees us as bafflingly ambivalent—shouting "technologist" at him like a curse, while we use the telephones, planes, refrigerators, serums, etc. that he has produced; deny any beauty or dignity to his cities (cf. Eric Gill); ridicule his every achievement, and tell him he has really nothing to show for his labors except a pair of dirty hands and a materialistic mind. Mr. Wilhemsen did not voice these specific views, but they can be heard over and over in Catholic lecture-halls, classrooms and magazines.

All of this betokens a lack of understanding and Christian compassion toward the modern technological man; if Pius XI could say that the great tragedy of the nineteenth century was the loss of the laboring class to the Church, are we not almost forced to conclude that the Church (and therefore Christ) was denied to the laboring man by Catholics who did not understand or feel his problems in a developing technological society? Nor does it require a particularly liberal and "eschatological" mind to see the force of the late Cardinal Suhard's observation that where Communism has made the greatest advances in Europe, there the Church has been weakest, not numerically, but "incarnationally," if you will; only the voice of the present will be heard in the present, and when Christ was made to speak, by many Catholics, in the already archaic accents of smug capitalism, anti-scientism or narrow nationalism, His supposed Voice has not been heard with either attention or respect.

And, that, in effect, is all that the Catholic liberal desires—that Christ should be able to speak, through us, to the men of the present in the voice of the present about the agonizing problems of the present.

This is not to insist that the world is in a state of flux, and that the Church must drift with the current, nor is it to canonize all change as good; it is rather to recognize that the world is now, as always, in a state of transition, and that the Church must accomodate itself to transition, as it has throughout history.

Such a view, of course, lays a heavy burden on the Catholic liberal; it forces him to be positive by exercising an analysis of compassion toward the modern world, rather than being negative by simply cataloging its errors and deficiencies. In this analysis of compassion he is heartened by the example of the modern Popes, quick to recognize the good in modern

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movements and quick to give that good direction and elevation without condoning the evils that may surround it.

Such a view, further, forces the liberal's thinking to be as timely as today's newspaper, and as timeless as the Tablets of the Law; it denies him the easy escape of invoking dogmas where dogmas do not fit, and requires him constantly to distinguish between the substance and accidents, reality and appearance, of all that he touches. This conscientious fear of a too-easy commitment takes valuable time and wears down the nerves, but it is necessary if we are to bear our Christian burden in the modern world.

PHILIP J. SCHARPER.

BLESSED AND COMFORTED

They Who Mourn

ROSE GRIECO

THEY don't have wakes like they used to any more; at least, not Italian wakes. These days, the Italian-Americans of my generation remember only too well a childhood colorfully exciting, but shaded always with the knowledge that everyone else in our neighborhood was American. We were the children of immigrants; we were Italian. I suppose my contemporaries figure it's about time Italian-Americans became assimilated. But becoming assimilated means smothering all the warmth we inherited from a million ancestors who lived and loved in the gentle climate of Italy, and putting on a cloak of cool detachment toward life and death, which is alien to our nature, and succeeds only in making nervous wrecks of us. Our ancestors didn't put a stopper on their emotions, plugging up a natural outlet for natural feelings. When they felt like laughing, you could hear them all over the county, and when they cried, glory, how they cried. This is as it should be. If we weren't meant to laugh and cry and tear our hair in anguish when we felt like it, then we wouldn't be human beings, but leaves or stones.

Anyway, that's what I mean about wakes. When I was a child, our people still retained the customs of Italy, and although these may have seemed strange to our Anglo-Saxon neighbors, they certainly had plenty of red blood in them. I mention this about wakes because one of my earliest memories has to do with the death of my beautiful Aunt Rose, who was killed on Thanksgiving day when I was almost three years old. The reason I remember it is because I had never before seen my mother drop a mop on the kitchen floor.

We had finished our dinner, and my father had taken my two older sisters to visit my Aunt Mary, who lived around the corner, and my baby brother had been put to sleep. So my mother started washing the kitchen floor as she did every day. I was sitting near the window watching her, as she sang the provincial folk-tunes out of her own childhood. I liked those songs because they always told a story. It wasn't till quite a few years later that I discovered that they very often dealt with love, revenge and death. Maybe the songs sounded sweet and gentle to me because it was my mother who sang them.

My grandmother was sitting in the parlor, rocking and crocheting a bedspread for one of our hope chests, even though we were much too young to know what it was young girls were supposed to hope for. She joined my mother in some of the songs, and it was a lovely afternoon. I probably never would have remembered it if it hadn't been that my mother had just poured some more soapy water on the floor when her Uncle Mike burst into the room, without knocking or anything.

My mother stopped singing, and looked at him. He just stood there, without saying a word, and she knew something was wrong. My grandmother stopped singing, too, and everyone knew that something was very wrong. He told my mother not to get excited, and that's when she dropped the mop. Because anybody knows that the only time somebody tells you not to get excited is when there's something to get really excited about. I don't remember much of what happened then, except that my mother and her uncle went tearing out of the house, and my grandmother started to moan as Latin women moan when something has happened to one of their children. And the water spread all over

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the kitchen floor. I was told, years later, that I picked up the mop and tried to finish the job my mother had started.

THE next memory I have of my Aunt Rose's death is when they brought her home. The weeping and wailing that went with this could be heard for blocks around.

My grandmother, in the manner of countless ancestors before her, sang the story of her daughter's life and death, in a rhythmic monotone, with periodic lamentations from the other mourners creating a melancholy counterpoint. My grandmother mourned in the uninhibited manner of the ancient Greeks, for intermittently she banged her head against the wall, in helpless fury. Shortly afterwards she went blind.

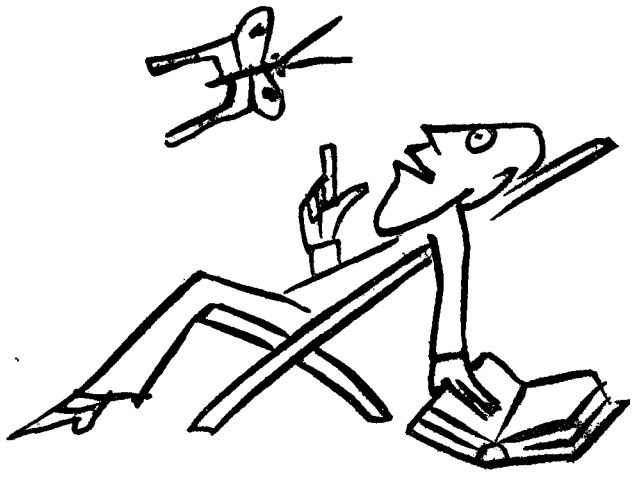
My Aunt Rose's only son, Michael, whom she had been seeking to come home to dinner when she made that fateful crossing at Bloomfield Avenue, has never been able to eat turkey or chicken since that black Thanksgiving Day.

Even today, after all these years, when my father or my aunts are seated at the head of their table, with children and grandchildren who have become quite thoroughly assimilated waiting eagerly for the turkey to be carved, at some moment during the long dinner we know that we will be reminded of our Aunt Rose's tragic death. Our parents were never trained to steer their thoughts into pleasant channels, but rather to remember forever their loved ones, regardless of what unhappy thoughts come with those memories.

When it came time for the coffin to be closed over my beautiful Aunt Rose, one by one her dear ones leaned over her to pour out their sorrow and love in shouting and weeping and tearing of hair. I remember being lifted over the glass-topped coffin, and told to kiss her for whom I was named.

They don't do such dramatic things anymore. And children are kept away from funerals as if there were a contagious disease connected with them. People don't even "die" anymore! They "go away." Since we were Italians, we weren't afraid to say that people die. I don't mind telling you that years later I kissed my Aunt Mary before they closed the coffin over her, too, even though her cheek was cold and hard as marble. I was twelve at the time, and I guess a psychologist would be all against it; only I kissed my Aunt Mary because my mother wanted me to, and because I loved her, and her being dead didn't change my love any.

But don't think that all aspects of the wakes of my childhood were sad, because they weren't. For one thing, the relatives came from near and far. Some of them we saw only at weddings and funerals, and they always gave us money, so naturally we were glad to



This gentleman's attitude is not at all what is advocated in

BE NOT SOLICITOUS

Edited by Maisie Ward

In fact it looks to us as if he has failed to read even the introduction in which Maisie Ward distinguishes between trust in God and the sin called tempting Providence. Him and his butterflies. However, he has nothing whatever to do with the true stories in this book, each written by a member of the family it is about and all concerned with the ways in which God has helped them out when things, for a wide variety of reasons, looked good and black. These families know from experience that when Our Lord said we had a Father in Heaven who knew we needed food and clothes as well as we did and who was quite capable of seeing we got them, He really meant it. The stories are a cross-section of the sort of desperate situations in which families can find themselves today: no two are alike but they have three things in common: Faith, poverty, and cheerfulness. You will enjoy meeting them. Maisie Ward's introduction says a number of things that badly needed saying about marriage and families: don't be surprised if it makes you want to cheer, it has had that effect on a number of people.

$3.00 from any bookstore

By this time there are probably very few Commonweal readers who don't get Sheed & Ward's **OWN TRUMPET** — well, how about sending it to a few of your friends — or enemies, if you don't like it? It will go free and postpaid, just send their names and addresses to **Lucy MacGill,**

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see them, no matter how sad the occasion. Then there was always the contingent of out-of-town relatives, who, after having said a prayer at the bier of the deceased, and having shed appropriate tears and voiced a fair amount of affectionate memories, would always somehow find their way to the kitchen, and, comfortably seated around the large, round table, with the inevitable gallon of wine in the center, manage to have quite a pleasant time of it.

With the relatives from the Bronx and Long Island having to stay over (some chose to stay for the entire three-day period—and no Italian worthy of the name would tolerate having a relative parked in a hotel), we children were piled into the large double beds, four and five at a throw. I realize that this was certainly not the most scientific approach to the problem, but it was loads of fun. As I grew older and began to observe how other people live, I was often amazed at the cool and distant feeling among first cousins, and sometimes even among brothers and sisters, and it occurred to me that maybe they never slept in the same bed. I don't see how anyone can feel distant toward relatives after such a childhood.

Anyway, about the goings-on in the kitchen during these wakes of ours: I'll never forget the time my Uncle Angelo came into the kitchen during my grandmother's wake and discovered that his two sisters-in-law from New York had finished almost a whole gallon of wine, while they wept over Granny's numerous virtues. Uncle Angelo, who never spoke in dulcet tones to start with, blew an over-sized fuse, and his remonstrations could be heard over on Route 23. The ladies, who had only wanted to make the trip worthwhile, indignantly announced that they would leave on the next train. But since it was doubtful if they could even make it to the front door, wiser heads prevailed, and they were put to bed, instead. However, this incident caused a rift in the family, and Uncle Angelo's relatives, who were furious at his having made a production out of something that they considered quite ordinary, stopped talking to his wife's side of the family, which was us. This state of affairs continued for seven years.

Then Aunt Mary died, and as usual, everybody showed up from everywhere, and everybody cried and kissed everybody, and the same people parked themselves in the kitchen with the everlasting gallon of wine. But Uncle Angelo didn't say anything this time, because Aunt Mary was his wife, and he didn't know what was going on anywhere.

ANOTHER thing that impressed me about wakes was this: no matter how numb and dazed with grief the bereaved were, hardly eating or sleeping for three days and nights, so lost in their world of despair that the goings-on in this world no longer existed for them, somehow they managed to remember if a fifth cousin's brother-in-law from Weehawkin didn't show up. I guess the reason is that Italians are in dead earnest about their wakes. When somebody dies, they drop everything, and even if they don't have a car, no matter how old or sick they are, they take trains and ferries and subways and always show up, because they know that in times of sorrow people need other people.

I imagine there are a lot of people who don't know about how the Italians insured themselves when they came to this country in the early part of the century. They were mostly poor, or they wouldn't have left Italy in the first place. They knew nothing about insurance companies, so when one of them died, all the other Italians who knew about it would bring a certain amount of money to the wake, so that the family could pay for the burial. The name and amount were duly recorded in a book, and this became a debt of honor for the bereaved family. It meant that they received the money when they needed it most, and it would be years before they would return it, because all the people who contributed were certainly not going to die at once.

Most of the Italian-Americans of my generation have broken away from this custom because they consider it old-fashioned and crude. I suppose it reminds them of the days when our people were pretty poor and kept very much to themselves. But I always loved the custom, because one dealt not with a cold and efficient insurance company but with the sympathy and kindness of other human beings. During the depression, when so many people were hard put to keep body and soul together, I remember going to Italian wakes and seeing very poor people go proudly into the back room to donate their few dollars toward easing someone else's burden. They were responding not to a semi-annual bill, but to the understanding in their hearts.

When I go to wakes today, I sense a strangeness in our behavior, and I know that we have become assimilated. No one dares have a dear one laid out at home anymore. It just isn't done. There is a hushed, refined atmosphere in the funeral home. And one must remember above all things to "keep a stiff upper lip." I cannot help but inquire why that is so necessary. If you can't cry at a wake, it means you can't cry anywhere. And that's bad.

There are flowers galore at our modern wakes, and very little weeping. If one of the old people from our parents' generation makes the mistake of showing honest emotion, she is looked at askance, and realizes sadly that she now stands amid the alien corn. But when one of them *has* the courage to cry, as women should cry at wakes, I find it almost impossible not to join her. But I think I weep not so much for one who has left this too imperfect world, as for a way of life that is fast disappearing.

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Young Men and Expensive Company

THE SECOND HAPPIEST DAY. By John Phillips. Harper. $3.75.

HEYDAY. By W. M. Spackman. Ballantine. $.35 in paper, $1.50 in cloth.

By WILLIAM PFAFF

NEW York has never been the town of literary tradition that Chicago was in the thirties, and, in Algren and a few others, remains today. New York has figured as background in the post war novels of what you might call the school of disillusioned *Time*-writers, but has never inspired the semi-sociological introspection of Chicago. New York surrounds the characters of the novels of New York. Chicago profoundly influences the characters of its novels.

There is, however, one tradition of New York writing which was begun by Scott Fitzgerald with *This Side of Paradise*. Call it the young Ivy Leaguer in New York tradition.

Two recent novels are in this genre, and with both, the publicity (and the publicity writers may have a more legitimate part in this tradition than the novelists) mentions the name Fitzgerald.

The better of the two is John Phillips' *The Second Happiest Day*. He writes of the second war generation, the sons of the men who were at Princeton in 1916-17 with Fitzgerald.

His young man, Gus Taylor, goes from a childhood of genteel poverty to an Ivy League academy, to Harvard, to the army, to Harvard again, to New York. And only at the end does he break free of the enervating pattern of his previous life: that of a poor youth traveling in expensive company on the gentle charity of friends. The protagonist of the novel is the gently charitable friend, who never learns to be grown up; who is lost outside of the silver-mounted, satin-lined box of an organized and predictable society. When Taylor begins to feel for ground beneath his feet, and moves out of the East Seventies apartment (which he had shared with his wealthy friend, and had never really been able to afford) the rich young man is bewildered, and to the end fails to understand why a person would refuse kindness.

Taylor sacrifices the suffocating kindnesses, "the elegant and expensive myth," and much more difficult, the girl who has every attribute except the ability to understand why he does what he does.

So it is very small drama, but for Taylor, and inferentially for us, a basic one. And it is played in an elaborate and beautifully-furnished background of New England and New York. Mr. Phillips is capable of fine, patient observation of the phenomena of expensiveness, the life led by a man at the River Club and at Abercrombie & Fitch, who knows he has no business being there.

THE second novel is an original book put out in paper as well as cloth as part of Ballantine's experiment in simultaneous publication. Mr. Spackman, the author, is a Princeton man ('27), a Rhodes Scholar, and for twenty years a radio writer. Now, in his late forties, he is publishing a first novel.

It is the story of two men from the class of Princeton, 1927. (Phillips had his men from Harvard—an inexcusable slip of tradition.) The narrator looks into the past twenty years to tell his own story and that of a classmate and friend who died in the war.

Their time gave them only two years of the irridescent kick of the twenties, and then there followed the windy decade of depression. That is where most of the story takes place. New York City during

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the depression. The gay and rich were broke and on the lip of hysteria. So Mr. Spackman's book is a lush and emotional story of how people lived on salaries which gave them sandwiches and neuroses.

A tragedy forms the single hard line in this soft web—the narrator's wife spends the decade in prison on a manslaughter charge, having killed some children in an automobile accident. Otherwise the story is an impassioned involvement in the past, sometimes quite moving, sometimes just a bit silly. It is quite erotic, again occasionally to a faintly absurd degree. And it is always very readable. Mr. Spackman quotes the lines "with a casual smile/saunter round corners to their doom," and he has tried, I think, to write such an account of his period, but he has not the Elliotic quality of distillation, of muscle, which makes the distinction between interesting and fine.

Old and New

IN THE MORNING LIGHT. By Charles Angoff. Beechhurst. $4.50.

By CAROL WEISS

THIS is the story of the Polonskys, a Jewish immigrant family that settled in Boston before the first World War. Early in the novel, Moshe Polonsky bursts out in exasperation, "Ah, *a klog tzu Columbus*" (a curse on Columbus). It was a common expression in the neighborhood. Not that these people actually regretted Columbus' voyage across the Atlantic, or their own. America assuredly was a golden land. It was free education and an end to pogroms and owning their own homes. But it was also a confusing place where Jews drifted away from their religion and their traditional values; it was the dog-eat-dog competition of business and the disruption of the warm family relationships of the old country. *In the Morning Light* is a sympathetic story of a family's difficult transition to a new way of life.

The time is the four years of the first World War. Since the Polonskys are a large family and this is a long book, the years are crowded with marriages, deaths, business problems, misunderstandings, births, celebrations. And this is only the middle volume of a trilogy. Mr. Angoff obviously loves these people, and he sees every detail of their lives as part of a significant drama. It is his affection that gives the story its warmth and stature, and its richly authentic background.

Mr. Angoff is best with the older people. There is Moshe, a gentle man, whose life centered around his religion and his family. When his brother persuaded him to go into business, he was suddenly caught up in an alien world of bookkeeping, loans, arguments, and worries. He had less and less to talk over with his wife. Almost imperceptibly he drifted away from the familiar pleasures of home and synagogue, and in their place he was left with headaches and a nagging sense of shame.

Aryeh was a Hebrew school teacher who decided that there was no future and less satisfaction in teaching Hebrew to boys who were more interested in baseball. He decided to learn a new profession, something less closely associated with Jews. After years of night school, he became a chemist with a good job and good pay. But finally one night he admitted to his wife that working with things in a laboratory didn't appeal to him. Scientists would never discover the really important factors in life. What he enjoyed was the *yiddische welt*, the old world of discussion and ideas in the Hebrew school.

The main character, however—at least by virtue of the number of words spent on him—is Moshe's son, David. He goes through high school in the four years of the novel, and Mr. Angoff follows him relentlessly every step of the way. With all the emphasis on his sensitivity and his adolescent awakenings, David sounds suspiciously autobiographical, but whatever the reason was for building the book around him, it was a mistake. The conflicts of these years of transition are not his. They are his parents' and grandparents'. David had little more to worry about than whether to work after school as a messenger

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or a delivery boy. It is when he is off-page that *In the Morning Light* comes closest to being what it sets out to be—a warm-hearted interpretation of the Jewish immigrant.

Human Comedy

THE LAUGHING MATTER. By William Saroyan. Doubleday. $3.50.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

THIS is a Saroyan love story, all about Evan and Swan Nazarenus, man and wife (he teaches the novel at Stanford—a most unlikely situation), and their two children, Red and Eva, who live in Palo Alto but have gone for a few weeks to live in Clovis at the home of Dade Nazarenus, Evan's brother (Dade is a gambler and has gone off to San Francisco to try his luck).

There is hardly any plot; it is just about people. Unfortunately, though, Saroyan is trying too hard and he has weighted these people down with cares he can't properly unload from them. In the last forty pages of the book, for a final instance, we are admitted to an abortion, a murder, two suicides and an accidental death as a car goes over a cliff, thus cozily wiping out, in the following order, Swan's child by another man (who teaches play-writing at Stanford), Swan, the playwright, Dade and Evan.

Too, despite all the activity that these events imply, the book is not one of action but of conversation (there is very little shooting, for instance, but lots of talk about the shooting), mainly dependent on the recorded speech of children in their world and the recorded speech of adults in theirs, liberally interspersed with inner monologues on life and love and death. These things, of course, though fine in themselves, and no matter what their progression prior to and following the action, do not finally solidify as a novel.

But it must be said, too, that the best things in the book—if you like Saroyan at all, and I understand there are some who don't—are the conversations, however loose and unattached.

"Let's go out on the front lawn and stand on our heads."

"No. It's too early. Let them sleep. You go back to bed and go to sleep. When you wake up again come back and we'll get dressed."

"Will we go out to eat figs or to stand on our heads?"

"To eat figs. It's too early to stand on our heads."

"Yes," Evan said. "It's too early."

This is not Saroyan "at his best" nevertheless, regardless of what his publishers believe. He was much better in the days of the beautiful white horse, when his name was Aram and he could still seemingly pull stories out of his hat.

At about that time *The New Yorker* wrote: "This new thing that Saroyan brings to us . . . is the feeling that he's not engaged in literary composition, but is just improvising, like a good hot pianist on his own after everybody's gone home."

Well, except for patches, he has quit improvising. He is now manufacturing, and he just isn't very good at it.

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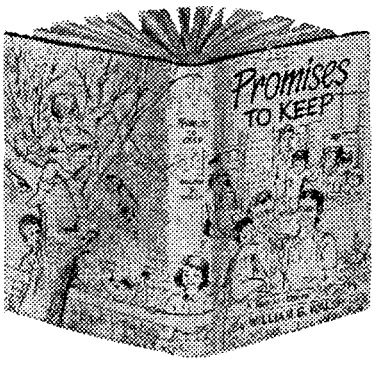

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Prison Growth

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. By Christopher Burney. Foreword by Christopher Fry. Coward-McCann. $2.75

By ANNE FREMANTLE

PRISON literature is notoriously powerful. Gandhi and Hitler, in their jails, wrote books that changed the world. For, "inside," the emotion and the tranquility are usually simultaneous, so that all prose takes on the recollectedness of poetry.

Christopher Burney, born in England and educated there, lived in France during his teens, and in 1939 went to Narvik with the South Wales Borderers. Later, having joined the Commandos, he was parachuted into France in May, 1942, and in August, was arrested and sent first to Fresnes, near Paris, and then to Buchenwald. He spent eighteen months in solitary confinement. He was interrogated, and beaten up; he suffered much of what Bruce Marshall's hero, Yeo-Thomas, "The White Rabbit," also endured. But how different their reactions! Yeo-Thomas, the extrovert, spent his whole time tapping, trying to escape, and finally succeeding. Christopher Burney was allergic to tapping, wanted no part in his fellow-prisoners' 'simian babbling' and escaped only inwards.

> . . . the man in the cell next to mine started to tap on the wall. When I understood that he was signalling to me I wanted him to stop. . . . I was suspicious of him and he bored me. . . . I had no wish to hurt him if he was in earnest, but I was selfish and prized my silence, especially the silence of night.

In his foreword, Christopher Fry says that men, on the whole, are separated by their communal activity, and that it is in solitude "we draw nearer to ourselves, and so to our kind."

This was certainly the case with Christopher Burney. He describes the ways in which he exercised body and mind. At first, only these were acknowledged. Then, gradually, the will and the heart made their demands known. The daily expectancy of torture and death had at first made the physical the focus and pivot of all things, the one concern was that under torture, he should not give away the unknown who were his contacts. Then memory began to feed the spirit. Remembering Sundays at home in Hertfordshire, at first in terms of Sunday lunch, for "like most of my contemporaries I regarded going to church as work on the day of rest. I paid no particular attention to what was said there." Then this became a "whiff" of recollection of the parable of the Prodigal Son. God became existential as the provider of bread, of the fatted calf, of a sudden actual slab of chocolate left in the cell.

Around Christmas, the Protestant padre appeared, offered Communion. Burney refused. "I should be doing something I have never done before and don't really believe in," he said. The padre left, leaving behind some literature, "representing God as a ferocious scourge when I was almost convinced that He was kind."

The punishments were hard: no

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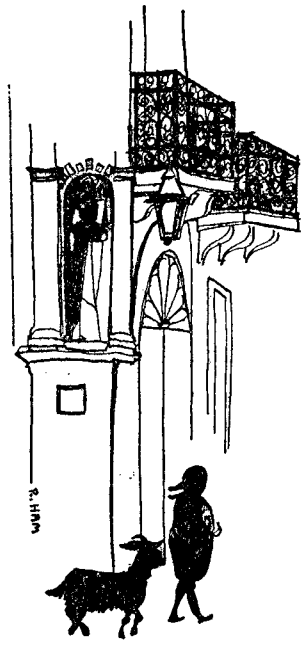

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